

and urges governments to make illegal manufacture, trade and possession a criminal offense.

The U.S. policy should be to support the U.N.'s Program of Action and try to make the resolution of the conference binding to the member states. We already have strict regulatory policies in arms trade within our borders. We need to expand those policies internationally with the assistance of the United Nations.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter into the RECORD, the article by Warren Hoge, titled With caveats. U.S. Backs Session at U.N. on curtailing Illegal Arms, published in the June 28, 2006 edition of the New York Times, reporting on the U.N. Small Arms & Light Weapons Review Conference 2006.

[From the New York Times, June 28, 2006]
WITH CAVEATS, U.S. BACKS SESSION AT U.N.
ON CURTAILING ILLEGAL ARMS
(By WARREN HOGE)

United Nations, June 27.—The Bush administration gave its backing on Tuesday to a United Nations conference on curtailing the international flow of illegal arms, but warned delegates against adopting measures that would restrict individual possession of weapons.

"The U.S. Constitution guarantees the rights of our citizens to keep and bear arms, and there will be no infringement of those rights," Robert G. Joseph, under secretary of state for arms control and international security affairs, told the *General Assembly*. "Many millions of American citizens enjoy hunting and the full range of firearms sports, and our work will not affect their rights," he said.

He also said Washington would object to any steps to establish international regulation of ammunition or to ban governments from selling arms to rebel groups, known in diplomatic jargon as "nonstate actors."

"While we will of course continue to oppose the acquisition of arms by terrorist groups," he said, "we recognize the rights of the oppressed to defend themselves against tyrannical and genocidal regimes and oppose a blanket ban on nonstate actors."

The two-week conference, which began Monday, is intended to improve ways of curbing the \$1 billion black market in the manufacture and distribution of small arms and light weapons that supply brutal civil wars and organized crime networks and end up killing an estimated 1,000 people every day worldwide.

Secretary General *Kofi Annan* reminded the gathering that "these weapons may be small, but they cause mass destruction." He urged member countries to toughen existing laws governing arms deals.

Steps that Mr. Joseph said the United States would support included the marking and tracing of weapons, controls on transfers, certification of the ultimate recipients, effective management of national stockpiles and destruction of illicit and government-declared surplus weapons.

Mr. Annan said the conference was not contemplating a global ban on gun ownership. "Nor do we wish to deny law-abiding citizens their right to bear arms in accordance with their national laws," he said.

He seemed to be referring to a campaign by the National Rifle Association, which has charged in mass mailings that the United Nations is plotting to take away Americans' guns through a treaty banning ownership.

John R. Bolton, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, confirmed that he had received hundreds of the form letters. Asked why all three citizen delegates from

the United States to the conference were prominent members of the gun lobby group, he said he made it a practice not to comment on the activities of nongovernmental organizations.

FANNIE LOU HAMER, ROSA
PARKS, AND CORETTA SCOTT
KING VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAU-
THORIZATION AND AMENDMENTS
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 9) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlemen for yielding. I rise in strong opposition to the King Amendment to H.R. 9, the "Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006." The King Amendment strikes, *inter alia*, section 203 of the bill. Section 203 is the part of the Voting Rights Act that provides language assistance to American citizen voters for whom English is not their first language.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment should be soundly defeated. I agree with the Mr. SENBRENNER that of all the weakening amendments offered, this is one of the worst and ugliest.

Mr. Chairman, one of the most important things proponents of the King Amendment fail to understand is that Section 203 removes barriers to voting faced by TAX PAYING AMERICAN CITIZENS, citizens who do not speak English well enough to participate in the election process. Tax-paying citizens should not be penalized for needing assistance to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Language minority citizens are required to pay taxes and serve in the military without regard to their level of English proficiency. If they can shoulder those burdens of citizenship, they should be able to share in the benefits of voting with appropriate assistance to exercise the vote.

Section 203 mandates language assistance based on a trigger formula for language minorities from four language groups: Native Americans, Native Alaskans, Asian Americans, and persons of Spanish heritage. Section 203 protects citizens, not illegal immigrants. Regardless of one's position on the ongoing debate over immigration reform, the debate over immigration policy is simply irrelevant to the debate on ensuring that the fundamental right to vote is exercised equally by English and non-English proficient citizens. According to the 2000 census, more than three-quarters (77 percent) of those protected by Section 203 are native-born citizens. For example, 100 percent of Native Americans and Native Alaskans were born in the United States; 98.6 percent of Puerto Ricans protected by Section 4(e) were born in the United States; and 84.2 percent of Latinos were born in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, section 203 was enacted to remedy the history of educational disparities, which have led to high illiteracy rates and low voter turnout. These disparities continue to

exist. As of 2000, three fourths of the 3 to 3.5 million students who are native-born were considered to be English Language Learners (ELLs), meaning the students don't speak English well enough to understand the basic English curriculum. ELL students lag significantly behind native-English speakers and are twice as likely to fail graduation tests. California has over 1,500,000 ELLs; Texas has 570,000 ELLs; Florida has 25,000 ELLs; and New York has over 230,000.

Since 1975, there have been more than 24 education discrimination cases filed on behalf of ELLs in 15 States. Fourteen of the States in which education discrimination lawsuits have been brought are covered by language assistance provisions. Since 1992, 10 cases have been filed. Litigation and consent decrees are currently pending in Texas, Alaska, Arizona, and Florida. Discrimination cases that have been brought address issues such as inadequate funding for ELLs, inadequate curriculum to assist ELLs become proficient in English, and lack of teachers and classrooms. These disparities increase the likelihood that ELLs will achieve lower test scores and drop out of school, ultimately, leading to lower voter registration and turnout.

Also, adults who want to learn English must endure long waiting periods to enroll in English Second Language (ESL) literacy centers. The lack of funding to expand the number of ESL centers around the country leaves minority citizens unable to enroll in classes for several years. For example, in large cities such as Boston, citizens must wait for several years to enroll. In New Mexico, citizens must wait up to a year. In the State of New York, the waiting lists were so long, the State eliminated them and instituted a lottery system. Once enrolled, learning English takes citizens several years to even obtain a fundamental understanding of the English language—not enough to understand complex ballots. Citizens should not be barred from exercising their right to vote while trying to become English proficient.

Most jurisdictions covered by Section 203 support its continued existence. According to a 2005 survey, an overwhelming majority of jurisdictions covered by Section 203 think that federal language assistance provisions should remain in effect for public elections. In fact, in a poll of registered voters, 57 percent believe it is difficult to navigate ballots and instructions and that assistance should be provided.

Mr. Chairman, it is instructive to review just a few contemporary examples which demonstrate the continuing need for the language assistance provisions of Section 203:

In 2003 in Harris County, Texas, officials did not provide language assistance for Vietnamese citizens. This prompted the Department of Justice to intervene and, as a result, voter turnout doubled and a local Vietnamese citizen was elected to a local legislative position.

The implementation of language assistance in New York City had enabled more than 100,000 Asian-Americans not fluent in English to vote. In 2001, John Liu was elected to the New York City Council, becoming the first Asian-American elected to a major legislative position in the city with the nation's largest Asian-American population.

In July 2005, the U.S. Dept. of Justice filed a lawsuit against the City of Boston for violations of the federal Voting Rights Act, specifically the language assistance provisions (Section 203) for Spanish language assistance

and racial discrimination (Section 2) against Asian American voters. The complaint alleges that Boston abridged the rights of language minority groups by:

Treating limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters disrespectfully;

Refusing to permit limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters to be assisted by an assistor of their choice;

Improperly influencing, coercing, or ignoring the ballot choices of limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters;

Failing to make available bilingual personnel to provide effectively assistance and information needed by minority language voters; and

Refusing or failing to provide provisional ballots to limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters.

In San Diego County, California, voter registration among Hispanics and Filipinos rose by over 20 percent after the Department of Justice brought suit against the county to enforce the language minority provisions of Section 203. During that same period, Vietnamese registrations increased by 40 percent.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, represents our country and this Congress at its best because it matches our words to deeds, our actions to our values. And, as is usually the case, when America acts consistent with its highest values, success follows. By eliminating language assistance to American voters, the King Amendment will make it more difficult for American citizens to participate in the political process simply because English is not their primary language. The King Amendment is thus inconsistent with American values and the spirit of the Voting Rights Act. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to reject the amendment.

MEDICARE HOME INFUSION THERAPY CONSOLIDATED COVERAGE ACT OF 2006

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 17, 2006

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join with my colleagues KAY GRANGER, TAMMY BALDWIN, and RANDY KUHL in introducing the Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Consolidated Coverage Act of 2006. This bill would correct long-standing gaps in Medicare coverage for home infusion therapy, and will enable thousands of beneficiaries to obtain these often life-saving therapies in the most convenient and cost-effective setting—their homes.

Under current Medicare coverage rules, beneficiaries who have severe infections, cancer, or congestive heart disease and many other diagnoses, are needlessly admitted into hospitals or nursing homes to receive the care they need. This is most unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because in many cases, infusion therapy administered in the patient's home is clearly the preferred alternative. Commercial health plans have long recognized the clinical value and cost-effectiveness of home infusion therapy, and full and proper coverage of home infusion therapy is commonplace among these payers. Medicare stands virtually alone in its antiquated coverage policies that discourage the use of a therapy that in actuality should be promoted for its cost savings, safety, clinical effectiveness, and convenience. At a time when there is a growing awareness of the

need to prevent or limit inpatient hospital stays for our Nation's elderly, we believe this legislation is extremely timely.

Our bill is very simple in its approach. Currently, whatever coverage exists for home infusion therapy is divided between part B and part D. Part B coverage is based on the durable medical equipment benefit, because an item of DME—the infusion pump—is sometimes needed to administer home infusion therapy. That coverage, however, is limited to about 23 drugs. Part D, the outpatient prescription drug benefit, covers more infusion drugs than part B, but does not cover the services, supplies and equipment necessary to safely and appropriately administer these therapies in the home. As a result, both part B and part D coverage of home infusion are very limited. Under part B, Medicare beneficiaries do not have access to many of the most common infusion drugs covered by commercial health plans. Under part D, many beneficiaries have to pay for the infusion services, supplies, and equipment with out-of-pocket funds. The clear result is that access to home infusion therapy, despite its potential for cost savings and good clinical outcomes, is needlessly limited.

Our bill would consolidate coverage for home infusion therapy under part B, so that coverage would be centered in one benefit and coverage would be designed to appropriately and accurately reflect what is involved in the safe and effective provision of home infusion therapy. The Secretary of HHS would apply quality standards that are consistent with prevailing community standard of care commonly utilized by commercial health plans. Both beneficiaries and the Medicare program itself would reap the benefits of broader access to these important medical treatments in the home.

I introduced a similar bill in 2001 that would have established a home infusion therapy benefit under part B. Since then Congress enacted the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 which created the part D prescription drug benefit. While I appreciate the efforts to broaden coverage of the drug portion of home infusion therapy, the problems I have described still persist because CMS believes it does not have the authority to cover anything beyond the drugs. Thus, effective coverage of home infusion therapy has remained elusive. We can fix this now.

Along with my colleagues, I urge early consideration of this long-overdue bill.

THANK YOU, HECTOR BARRETO,
FOR A JOB WELL DONE

HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 17, 2006

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, last Monday was the last day in office for Hector Barreto, the second-longest serving SBA Administrator in its 53-year history. Last week, there was a reception in honor of former Administrator Barreto with a broad spectrum of the small business community in Washington in attendance. This reflected well upon Mr. Barreto and his leadership style to bring people together of diverse interests and backgrounds.

I don't know how Mr. Barreto put up with being in Washington for these past 5 years.

I'm proud to be associated with Mr. Barreto and where he has taken the SBA to serve more small businesses than ever before in the history of the agency. I'm also proud to say that Mr. Barreto and I have similar backgrounds, growing up in the family restaurant business in the Midwest.

It's amazing to see what has happened during the tenure of Mr. Barreto as Administrator of the SBA. Mr. Barreto was confirmed by the Senate and then sworn into office on July 25, 2001. Several weeks later, our Nation was hit by the awful terrorist attacks on September 11. More Americans were killed in 9/11 than at Pearl Harbor. Mr. Barreto was just getting used to his new job responsibilities and this terrible tragedy struck America. Administrator Barreto rose up to the challenge by extending Economic Injury Disaster loans to small businesses all across America regardless of their proximity to the locations of the actual terrorist attacks. The terrorists sought to devastate our economy by tearing down the World Trade Center and disrupting air travel but they did not count on the resiliency of the small business sector and the American people. More than 10,000 small businesses across the Nation employing 166,000 workers were helped with over \$1 billion in 9/11 SBA disaster loans.

If that wasn't enough, Mr. Barreto achieved great results in other programs of the SBA. Between 2000 and 2005, the SBA more than doubled the number of loans made through its main business loan guarantee programs. The dollar volume also dramatically increased—in 7(a) by nearly 40 percent and in the 504 program by threefold. And after a series of programmatic shut-downs and curtailments, I joined with Mr. Barreto in making the historic decision in late 2004 to finally get the 7(a) program off the rollercoaster of the appropriations process and have it funded entirely through user fees just like the 504 and the SBIC program. Now, the 7(a) program is going like gangbusters, serving record numbers of small businesses throughout all demographic groups, as compared to when it was receiving a loan subsidy.

There has also been a steady increase in the number of individuals receiving technical assistance, education, and counseling through the SBA and its resource partners. Also, as a result of active engagement between the SBA and Federal agencies, Federal procurement dollars going to small businesses are at an all-time high. All this was accomplished while transforming the SBA into an agency to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Change is hard but Mr. Barreto made the courageous decision to have the SBA operate more like the private sector than a bureaucracy. Doing more with less should be praised, not condemned, particularly in this tough budget environment.

Then, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma violently struck the gulf coast last year. It was as if a swath of complete devastation 100 miles wide ripped through our country from Boston to Chicago. Again, Administrator Barreto and his team in the Office of Disaster Assistance came through despite enormous obstacles placed in their path, including not being able to really get to the areas of deepest destruction until well after a month after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans. The SBA and Administrator Barreto in particular took many below-the-belt political potshots